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**GREAT LEAPS IN JAPAN'S SECURITY POLICY IN AN  
INTERNATIONAL CONTEXT: THE WAY AHEAD**

**BY**

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**20020604 219**

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## ABSTRACT

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TITLE: Great Leaps in Japan's Security Policy in an International Context: The Way Ahead

FORMAT: Strategy Research Project

DATE: 4 April 2002 PAGES: 31 CLASSIFICATION: Unclassified

After the end of World War II, Japan was reborn as a democratic country. Japan decided to choose the alliance with the United States to guarantee its security. Japan has been building a modest defense capability under the provision of the Constitution of 1946, while firmly maintaining the Japan-U.S. Security arrangements. In an effort to establish the Japan Self Defense Forces (JSDF) in the early 1950s, the Government of Japan issued the interpretation of Article 9 of the Constitution. This interpretation has prohibited Japan from exercising the right of collective self-defense and has long been the most important premise for Japan's post-WWII security policy.

During the Cold War period, the first security priority for Japan was to cope with the Soviet military threat. However, a series of epoch-making events in the early stages of the post Cold War period reflected the change in Japan's security policy and enlarged the roles and missions of the JSDF. At the same time, the Japan-U.S. alliance entered a new stage of development. The alliance changed its nature from the traditional anti-Soviet focus to an Asia-Pacific-wide security approach. Thus, Japan could no longer be as innocent vis-à-vis its national security and its role in international security issues, especially in the aftermath of the terrorist attacks on 11 September 2001.

Although dispatching Japan's destroyers and supply vessels to the Indian Ocean in support of the coalition campaign against terrorism marked one of the most significant strides in Japan's global military role since World War II, Japan's security policy may have reached its culminating point. Further efforts should be made so that Japan can fully implement its expected role within the international community. In order to fully participate in future coalition efforts that help ensure peace and stability of the world, Japan should make another great leap and allow itself to exercise the right of collective self-defense.



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>ABSTRACT .....</b>	<b>iii</b>
<b>GREAT LEAPS IN JAPAN'S SECURITY POLICY IN AN INTERNATIONAL CONTEXT: THE WAY AHEAD .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>EVOLUTION OF JAPAN'S SECURITY POLICY.....</b>	<b>2</b>
FIRST PHASE: FROM RESTORATION OF SOVEREIGNTY THROUGH THE 1960 REVISION OF THE JAPAN-U.S. SECURITY TREATY (1950S).....	3
<b>Foundations of the Security Policy .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Premises for the Security Policy .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Political Interpretation of the Constitution.....</b>	<b>4</b>
SECOND PHASE: FROM THE 1960 REVISION OF THE JAPAN-U.S. SECURITY TREATY THROUGH THE END OF THE COLD WAR (1960S – 1980S) .....	5
<b>The 1960 Revision of the Security Treaty .....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Implications of the Treaty During the Cold War.....</b>	<b>6</b>
THIRD PHASE: POST COLD WAR PERIOD (1990S).....	7
<b>Challenges in the 1990s .....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Changes in the Security Policy.....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Opportunities for Public Debate .....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>IMPERATIVES VIS-À-VIS JAPAN'S SECURITY POLICY IN THE NEW MILLENNIUM ....</b>	<b>9</b>
CHALLENGES IN THE BEGINNING OF THE NEW CENTURY .....	9
<b>GREAT LEAPS IN SECURITY POLICY.....</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>CULMINATING POINT IN JAPAN'S SECURITY POLICY? .....</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>THE WAY AHEAD: FURTHER GREAT LEAPS .....</b>	<b>13</b>
REVISING THE INTERPRETATION OF THE CONSTITUTION .....	13
AMENDING THE CONSTITUTION.....	14
IMPLEMENTING THE LIFT OF THE PROHIBITION OF THE RIGHT OF COLLECTIVE SELF-DEFENSE.....	15
<b>CONCLUSION.....</b>	<b>15</b>

<b>ENDNOTES.....</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY.....</b>	<b>23</b>

## GREAT LEAPS IN JAPAN'S SECURITY POLICY IN AN INTERNATIONAL CONTEXT: THE WAY AHEAD

After the end of World War II, Japan was reborn as a democratic country. And the National Police Reserve (NPR), which later became the Japan Self Defense Forces (JSDF), was established in 1950 when the Korean War broke out. During the Cold War period, based on the so-called "*Yoshida Doctrine*,"<sup>1</sup> Japan placed the first priority on her economic recovery and development, leaving national security in the hands of the United States. At the same time, Japan's post-WWII security policy has certain premises. The most important premise is the political interpretation of the Constitution, which prohibits Japan from exercising the right of collective self-defense. Throughout the post-WWII history, while Japan's security policy has evolved reflecting the Japan-U.S. security arrangements, each government of Japan has planned and implemented the security policy based on this premise.

The end of Cold War has seen the disappearance of the structure of confrontation between East and West on the basis of overwhelming militarily might. Furthermore, Russia's conventional forces have decreased considerably since the end of the Cold War, no other nation has appeared that can rival the United States militarily, and the potential for an outbreak of armed conflict on a world-wide scale has receded. On the other hand, territorial disputes remain and religious conflicts and conflicts rooted in ethnic problems have moved to the forefront, giving rise to complicated and diverse regional conflicts. The danger of the proliferation of weapons of mass effect and missiles is increasing. Thus, a volatile, uncertain, complicated and ambiguous (VUCA) security environment persists in international affairs, even after the Cold War.

During the Cold War period, the first security priority for Japan was to cope with the Soviet military threat. However, a series of epoch-making events in the early stages of the post Cold War period reflected the change in Japan's security policy and enlarged the roles and missions of the JSDF. At the same time, the Japan-U.S. alliance entered a new stage of development. The alliance changed its nature from the traditional anti-Soviet focus to an Asia-Pacific-wide security approach. Thus, Japan could no longer be as innocent vis-à-vis its national security and its role in international security issues, especially in the aftermath of the terrorist attacks on 11 September 2001.

Japan has participated in several United Nations peacekeeping operations and international humanitarian assistance activities, and has also dispatched the Japan Maritime Self Defense Force (JMSDF) flotilla to the Indian Ocean in support of the coalition campaign

against terrorism. These marked significant strides in Japan's global military role since World War II. However, Japan's security policy may have reached its culminating point. Further efforts should be made so that Japan can fully implement its expected role within the international community. In order to fully participate in future coalition efforts for peace and stability of the world, Japan should reexamine its long-held security premises and allow itself to exercise the right of collective self-defense.

The first part of this paper will review the evolution of Japan's security policy in the post-WWII period. Next, the imperatives vis-à-vis Japan's security policy in the new millennium will be examined to identify problems. Recommendations will be made following the analysis of the lifting of the prohibition of the right of collective self-defense.

## **EVOLUTION OF JAPAN'S SECURITY POLICY**

Based on their experience of World War II, with strong anti-militarism orientation, the Japanese people had a tendency to regard military-related issues as unconditionally bad. The Japanese people, bureaucrats and politicians as well, have thought only the thinkable and never thought about what they did not want to see.<sup>2</sup> In the political arena, security issues have been treated not as political issues but as a test of the political beliefs of each politician and political party with regard to Article 9 of the Constitution of Japan, which renounces war.<sup>3</sup> Article 9 of the Constitution reads:

Aspiring sincerely to an international peace based on justice and order, the Japanese people forever renounce war as a sovereign right of the nation and the threat or use of force as means of settling international disputes. In order to accomplish the aim of the preceding paragraph, land, sea, and air forces, as well as other war potential, will never be maintained. The right of belligerency of the state will not be recognized.<sup>4</sup>

Upon the acceptance of the terms of unconditional surrender on 15 August 1945, Japan was completely disarmed and placed under the control of the Allied Powers. It was when Japan restored its sovereignty as an independent nation on 8 September 1951 that Japan became obliged to work out its own security policy. Since then, Japan has experienced at least two major changes in its security policy. Those changes have coincided with the changes in nature of the Japan-U.S. security arrangements. In other words, Japan's post-WWII security policy has evolved reflecting the redefinition of the Japan-U.S. security arrangements, and vice versa.

## FIRST PHASE: FROM RESTORATION OF SOVEREIGNTY THROUGH THE 1960 REVISION OF THE JAPAN-U.S. SECURITY TREATY (1950S)

### Foundations of the Security Policy

The foundations of Japan's post war security were formed during the period between 1951 and 1960. During that period, Japan decided to choose the alliance with the United States to guarantee its security and, ten years later, both governments revised the security arrangement of 1951. Upon those foundations, Japan enjoyed post war recovery, economic prosperity and political stability during the Cold War period.

The preamble of the 1951 treaty reads:

Japan has this day signed a Treaty of Peace with the Allied Powers. On the coming into force of that Treaty, Japan will not have the effective means to exercise its inherent right of self-defense because it has been disarmed. There is danger to Japan in this situation because irresponsible militarism has not yet been driven from the world. Therefore Japan desires a Security Treaty with the United States of America to come into force simultaneously with the Treaty of Peace between Japan and the Untied States of America. ...<sup>5</sup>

According to Mr. Fumihiko Togo, Japan Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in those days, no significant debate took place with regard to the issue of the right of collective self-defense, mainly because the San Francisco Peace Treaty of 1951 stated, "The Allied Powers for their part recognized that Japan as a sovereign nation possesses the inherent right of individual or collective self-defense referred to in Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations ..." <sup>6</sup>

During the Korean War, the NPR, which was designed to assist the ordinary police in the event of an internal insurrection, was organized and, in 1954, the JSDF were established. Japan became a member of the United Nations in 1956 and adopted the Basic Policy for National Defense in 1957. Since then, Japanese defense policy has been based on the Basic Policy for National Defense. That policy has two principle tenets: first the promotion of efforts for peace, such as international cooperation, and establishment of the foundations for national security through measures designed to stabilize the livelihood of the people; and second, the development of an efficient defense capability and adherence to the Japan-U.S. security arrangements.<sup>7</sup>

Under the Basic Policy for National Defense, Japan has been building a modest defense capability under the provision of the Constitution. Japan adheres to the fundamental principles of maintaining an exclusively defense-oriented policy and not becoming a military power that might pose a threat to other countries. Japan also adheres to the principle of civilian control of

the military and observes the Three Non-Nuclear Principles, while maintaining Japan-U.S. security arrangements.<sup>8</sup>

### Premises for the Security Policy

From the outset in the early 1950s, there have been certain basic premises for Japan's security policy. Without exception, each government of Japan so far has planned and implemented the security policy and strategy based on the following premises. The most important premise is, drawn from the *political* interpretation of the Constitution, the prohibition of exercise of the right of collective self-defense. This has prohibited Japan from fully cooperating and conducting bilateral use of force in the areas outside of Japan with its ally, the United States. However, Japan's security policy has changed and the roles of its forces have been expanded over time, especially in the post Cold War period. Japan dispatched the JMSDF minesweepers to the Gulf area after the Gulf War, and also the JSDF peacekeeping and humanitarian assistance detachments overseas, most recently to the United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor (UNTAET) in 2002. The Guidelines for Japan-U.S. Defense Cooperation (Defense Guidelines) of 1997 and related legislation have paved the way for Japan to provide the United States with search and rescue and rear area support within not only Japan's territory, but also in areas surrounding Japan as long as it is distinguished from areas where combat operations are being conducted. As explicitly subscribed in the Defense Guidelines, the concept, situations in areas surrounding Japan, is not geographic but situational.<sup>9</sup>

These conditions have not been implemented based on the intellectual efforts to work out what should be really necessary for Japan's national security. But they have been determined from such perspectives that to what extent Japan can do within the existing legal framework in response to situations the governments have faced.<sup>10</sup>

### Political Interpretation of the Constitution

Since the 1950s, Japan possessed its own defense capability, and eventually circumstances required the first revision of the security treaty. In an effort to establish the JSDF, the Government of Japan (GOJ) encountered a wave of objection asserting the unconstitutionality of the JSDF and finally issued the interpretation of Article 9 of the Constitution. On 29 May 1956, the Cabinet's Legal Affairs Bureau, stated:

It is recognized under international law that a state has the right of collective self-defense. It is therefore self evident that Japan, as a sovereign state, has that right. The GOJ nevertheless takes the view that the exercise of the right of self-defense as authorized under Article 9 of the Constitution is confined to the

minimum necessary level for the defense of the country. The GOJ believes that the exercise of the right of collective self-defense exceeds that limit and is not, therefore, permissible under the Constitution.<sup>11</sup>

The interpretation was *not legally and logically* drawn from the interpretation of the Constitution which was drafted based on both the Kellogg-Briand Pact of 1928 and the United Nations Charter, but was *politically* established so as to have people of Japan believe that the JSDF would be constitutional since the forces would be to exercise the right of individual self-defense.<sup>12</sup> Neither document denies war or use of force for self-defense. In any case, this interpretation became the most significant premise for Japan's security policy. Substantial parts of Japan's defense policy such as conditions for the exercise of the right of self-defense, geographic boundaries within which the right of self-defense may be exercised, roles and missions of both countries described in the Japan-U.S. security arrangements, and nature of the JSDF have been regulated by this interpretation.

During this phase, the foundations and premises of Japan's post war security policy were formed. Although the security arrangements between Japan and the United States were revised in 1960, the GOJ has firmly maintained its interpretation of the Constitution with regard to the right of collective self-defense.

#### **SECOND PHASE: FROM THE 1960 REVISION OF THE JAPAN-U.S. SECURITY TREATY THROUGH THE END OF THE COLD WAR (1960S – 1980S)**

##### **The 1960 Revision of the Security Treaty**

The 1960 version of the security treaty was drafted based on the constitutional interpretation of the right of self-defense of both parties and intended to solve several controversial issues of the original arrangement. The fundamental changes involve Articles 5 and 6. Article 5 states: "upon an armed attack against Japan's territory, each country would act in accordance with its constitutional provisions and processes." In this case, while Japan would exercise only the right to individual self-defense, the United States would exercise rights to individual and collective self-defense. Therefore, Japan would not be obliged to act together with the United States against such hostile actions that would take place in the area outside of its territory. This article clearly inferred the roles and missions of both countries; the JSDF would primarily conduct defensive operations in Japan's territory and its surrounding waters and airspace; U.S. forces would support JSDF operations and also conduct operations to supplement functional areas which exceed the capacity of the JSDF. These roles and missions

were subsequently implemented in the Defense Guidelines, approved by the Japan-U.S. Security Consultative Committee on 27 November 1978.<sup>13</sup>

In order to address inherent asymmetries in the security arrangements, Article 6 of the Security Treaty prescribes that the United States is granted the use of facilities and areas in Japan for the purpose of contributing to the security of Japan and the maintenance of international peace and security in the Far East.

By the 1960 revision, Japan-U.S. security arrangements became to encompass not only defense of Japan but also maintenance of peace and stability of the region. In other words, the 1960 revision of the treaty paved the way for potential security cooperation between the two countries in regional or global perspectives.

### **Implications of the Treaty During the Cold War**

In this period, especially after the 1970s when the Soviet Union reinforced its military strength in the Far Eastern Military District in midst of the Cold War, Japan-U.S. security arrangements became more important for the U.S. strategy in the Far East. Japan's basic security policy gradually formed throughout the decade. The policy was formed around three pillars; maintenance of the security arrangements with the United States, moderate buildup of defense capability, and promotion of diplomatic and economic efforts. Those pillars were clearly asserted in his policy guidance of 27 November 1978 by then Prime Minister Masayoshi Ohira.<sup>14</sup> The policy was known as "*Sogo Anzenhosho Senryaku* (Comprehensive Security Strategy)" and ensured the security of the nation through deterrence and defense with the combination of the Japan-U.S. security arrangements and the JSDF as the military means and diplomatic and economic efforts as non-military means. This approach was effective politically because it moved Japan's defense debate away from its previous narrow and popular military focus.<sup>15</sup>

During the Cold War period, the first security priority for Japan was to cope with the military threat posed by the Soviet Union. Therefore, throughout the 1970s and 1980s, contributing both militarily and diplomatically to the Western powers' strategy to globally contain the Soviet Union by maintaining the above mentioned policy was considered to be the best way to maintain Japan's security. Consequently, Japan achieved its security objectives while performing an important role as an ally of the United States.

## THIRD PHASE: POST COLD WAR PERIOD (1990S)

### Challenges in the 1990s

The situation changed at the end of the Cold War. A series of epoch-making events in the early stages of the post Cold War period reflected the change in Japan's security policy and enlarged the roles and missions of the JSDF. Those events included the JMSDF minesweeping operation after the Gulf War in 1991, the Japan Ground Self Defense Force (JGSDF) participation in the United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC) in 1992-1993, the JGSDF chemical decontamination operation in the aftermath of the *sarin* gas attack on the Tokyo subway system in 1995, North Korea's missile firing over Japan's airspace in 1998, and the JMSDF maritime security action ordered for the first time in response to North Korean spy boats in 1999.<sup>16</sup>

While the JSDF had never been employed during the Cold War period other than domestic disaster relief operations, the events in the 1990s have led the political leaders of Japan to explicitly consider the JSDF as one of the means available to achieve Japan's security objectives. And the JSDF has been required to perform their missions in the international arena.

In order to meet these challenges posed by the post Cold War period, in November 1995 the GOJ adopted the National Defense Program Outline (NDPO) in and after JFY1996 which broadened the roles and missions of the JSDF. Furthermore, the Defense Guidelines were revised in 1997.

### Changes in the Security Policy

As mentioned in the NDPO of 1995, Japan determined to maintain the basic policies formed during the preceding period. Further evolution of those policies occurred. Since the early 1990s, Japan has become increasingly aware of the importance of multilateral security cooperation. Japan has recognized the need to take a more active role in international efforts to deal with emerging problems in the post Cold War world.<sup>17</sup> In other words, while the ends and means of the previous policies remained relatively intact, the ways of the security strategy were modified.

Among the three pillars of Japan's security policy, the first pillar, Japan-U.S. security arrangements, was strengthened through the so-called "redefinition process." The Persian Gulf War of 1991 and the 1994 North Korean nuclear crisis have done much to raise strategic expectations of Japan, which in any case had been shifting inexorably since the end of the Cold War toward greater Japanese responsibility. Since the Gulf War, one of the factors motivating

the changes now underway has been the destabilizing effect of the alliance not being able to cooperate more realistically.<sup>18</sup> Thus, the alliance of the Cold War period was subject to redefinition in early 1990s.

Following the Japan-U.S. Joint Declaration on Security of 1996,<sup>19</sup> the GOJ and the United States Government revised the Defense Guidelines in 1997. While the 1978 Japan-U.S. Defense Guidelines focused only on defense of Japan, the 1997 version focuses more on bilateral cooperation with respect to regional and/or sub-regional security issues as well as defense of Japan. The alliance has entered a new stage of development. With this revision, the alliance changed its nature from the traditional anti-Soviet focus to an Asia-Pacific-wide security approach.<sup>20</sup>

The second pillar, Japan's defense capability, was also strengthened by the 1995 NDPO. While the NDPO adopted in 1976 stated only one role of the Japan's defense capabilities, namely, national defense, the 1995 NDPO clarified the roles of Japan's defense capability in three ways: national defense, response to large-scale disasters and various other situations, and contribution to the creation of a more stable security environment. The second role also includes response to certain situations arising in the areas surrounding Japan, response to terrorism, as well as traditional disaster relief.<sup>21</sup>

The third pillar, diplomatic and economic efforts, especially diplomatic ones, transformed to include such functions as preventive diplomacy and peace building in the international arena and/or the Asia Pacific region. In this regard, Japan has been actively pursuing measures it considers important for eliminating the causes of instability and increasing mutual trust among the countries of the region. Japan conducts bilateral defense exchanges with related countries and participates in multilateral security dialogues like those provided by the Association of East-Asian Nations (ASEAN) Regional Forum (ARF). In addition, Japan has been working toward defense exchanges with countries in Europe and elsewhere. As of May 2001, Japan has conducted fourteen regular consultation meetings with foreign countries other than that with the United States. Thirteen of them were initiated during the 1990s.<sup>22</sup>

Since the end of World War II, Japan's military has been constrained from expanding by both the international community and domestic opinion. Now that many of the nations that put international restrictions in place are tearing them down, the primary restriction to expanding Japan's security role is Japanese public opinion.

## **Opportunities for Public Debate**

Reflecting those changes induced by the end of the Cold War, political and public awareness of security issues had been improved dramatically. Political acceptance of the military has improved the awareness of the people to the security of their country, and vice versa. The relationship between the military and the state is becoming more normal in the sense that it is moving to a pattern which is characteristics of other democratic states.<sup>23</sup> Public mistrust of the JSDF has declined. It is now viewed as a legitimate state institution. For example, according to a public opinion survey conducted in 1999, more than 70 percent of the population considered the JSDF as well as the Japan-U.S. Security Treaty as the primary means to maintain Japan's security, compared to 40.9 percent in 1965. Nearly 80 percent of the people supported JSDF participation in the UN-led peacekeeping operations, while only 45.5 percent did in 1991.<sup>24</sup>

In summary, in response to the end of the Cold War, the missions and sphere of operations of the JSDF dramatically enlarged. The JSDF has been tested by politicians as well as by the Japanese people. Thus Japan's security issues became more practical matters of dialogue and discussion among political decision makers than they used to be during the Cold War period. These developments illustrate that Japan has gradually become a "normal" country. Japan has relieved itself of the WWII trauma to some extent and has become prepared to perform its international security responsibility.

## **IMPERATIVES VIS-À-VIS JAPAN'S SECURITY POLICY IN THE NEW MILLENNIUM**

### **CHALLENGES IN THE BEGINNING OF THE NEW CENTURY**

The terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center buildings and the Pentagon on 11 September 2001 dramatically accelerated Japan's move to expand its security policy. During the subsequent two months, Japan prepared for its most expansive military role since World War II. President George W. Bush's call for international support in dealing with terrorism produced a shuffling of alliances in the region. Japan's Prime Minister, Junichiro Koizumi, with unprecedented support by the Japanese people,<sup>25</sup> swiftly enacted his "Seven-Point Plan" to allow the JSDF to provide rear area support for the U.S. military action in Afghanistan.<sup>26</sup>

The Japanese Diet passed a new law, Antiterrorism Special Measures Act, on 29 October 2001, which permitted Japanese logistical support for U.S. and allied troops in any campaign against Afghanistan's Taliban regime or other accused supporters of terrorism. Japan's first echelon of support consisted of three JSDF vessels (one supply ship and two destroyers) which

left Japan for the Indian Ocean on 9 November 2001.<sup>27</sup> And the second echelon of JSDF vessels followed by the end of the following month. The first flotilla was replaced by the second one in the last week of February 2002.<sup>28</sup> This unprecedented move demonstrated Japan's will to continuously commit itself in international collective efforts to fight against any move that would pose a threat to international stability.

Furthermore, on 22 December 2001, Japanese Coast Guard (JCG) vessels hit and sunk a suspicious ship on the East China Sea. This was the first time that Japan has applied force against a foreign ship in nearly 50 years, showing that great changes were taking place in Japan's security policy. Partly because this incident took place in waters within China's Exclusive Economic Zone, Beijing expressed its uneasiness to Tokyo and asked the GOJ for a "cautious approach to the incident." However, the GOJ immediately justified its decision to take that unprecedented action as based upon the exercise of the right of self-defense.<sup>29</sup>

#### GREAT LEAPS IN SECURITY POLICY

Participation in the war on terrorism marked one of the most significant advances in Japan's global military role since World War II, and has accelerated the debate in Japan about the role of the country's defense forces. To date, Japan has restricted its troops to United Nations peacekeeping operations, and even then they can be dispatched only when the warring parties have reached a cease-fire.

The change in the Japanese military role implemented in the aftermath of the terrorist attacks on 11 September 2001 is a significant step in the slow, incremental expansion of the role of Japan's armed forces since the Gulf War in 1991. Japan is loath to repeat its experience of the Gulf War, when it wrung its hands over what to do for so long that the six JMSDF minesweepers it eventually sent arrived after the conflict ended. Japan contributed \$13 billion to the \$80 billion cost of the war, but sent no troops, and was roundly criticized for "checkbook diplomacy." The decision made by the Prime Minister Koizumi to dispatch the JMSDF flotilla to the Indian Ocean to participate in the war on terrorism give the JSDF much greater leeway (so long as Japanese troops stay out of the combat zone) for a broad range of rear-guard roles, including ferrying supplies, setting up medical care and possibly providing intelligence and early-warning information to U.S. and allied forces. The Antiterrorism Special Measures Act of 29 October 2001 allows, for the first time, the Japanese troops to use their weapons to protect personnel once placed under their control while the use of weapons was strictly limited to self-defense previously.

While taking strong steps to support the war on terrorism, the Japanese Diet amended the International Peace Cooperation Bill so as to ease the use of weapons to such an extent that Japanese peacekeeping troops can protect with their weapons not only Japanese troops but also troops of other countries, personnel of international organizations, and personnel once placed under their control. That amendment, however, would allow Japanese contingent to use their weapons to protect others under their control. In other words, the use of weapons, for instance, to support other nations' soldiers fighting side by side with Japanese soldiers is prohibited. Such use of weapons in that case is considered as an exercise of the right of collective self-defense.

At the same time, the Diet also lifted the moratorium on the assignments for core units of peacekeeping forces. Those assignments include: 1) monitoring the observance of cessation of armed conflict and relocation, withdrawal, or demobilization of armed forces, 2) stationing and patrol in buffer zones, 3) inspection or identification of the import and export of weapons, 4) collection, storage, or disposal of abandoned weapons, 5) assistance for the designation of cease-fire lines and other boundaries done by the parties at conflict, and 6) assistance for exchange of prisoners-of-war among the parties at conflict. The lift of the moratorium paved the way for future dispatch of the combat troops of the JSDF to United Nations peacekeeping missions.<sup>30</sup> These legislative measures have long been considered to be necessary for Japan's future successful participation in United Nations peacekeeping operations.

Other than the new law in support of international effort to fight against terrorism, and the amendment of the International Peace Cooperation Bill to make Japan's participation in United Nations peacekeeping missions more effective, several other issues remained with regard to Japan's future security role. Among them are heated dialogues and discussions over studies on emergency legislation.<sup>31</sup> The GOJ is supposed to submit a package of four bills about possible emergency contingency measures; a national security bill, a revision bill on the establishment of the Security Council of Japan, and two separate bills designed to facilitate operations by the JSDF and U.S. forces.<sup>32</sup>

As noted earlier, the issues mentioned above are not completely new. They have been discussed for a long time. Some of them have been "on the table" in the Diet for more than three decades. However, it is important to note that the tragedy of September 2001 really led the politicians and the Japanese people to commit themselves into serious intellectual debate over the issues to preserve peace and stability of the world. The remarkably strong leadership of the Prime Minister has been instrumental in implementing the new legislation to expand Japan's international role, especially that of the JSDF.

## CULMINATING POINT IN JAPAN'S SECURITY POLICY?

As stated above, Japan's security policy contains several important characteristics. First, Japan's security policy still heavily depends on the security arrangements with the United States. These arrangements have also contributed to peace and stability in the Asia-Pacific region where no regional security framework exists. The region has maintained peace and stability based on bilateral alliance framework with the United States and regional fora such as ARF.

The United States has long asserted that the U.S.-Japan security alliance anchors the U.S. presence in the Asia-Pacific region and that the alliance remains the cornerstone for achieving common security objectives and maintaining a peaceful and prosperous environment for the region.<sup>33</sup> During his trip to Japan in February 2002, President George W. Bush reaffirmed the long-held U.S. policy vis-à-vis Japan. In his remarks at the joint press conference with Prime Minister Koizumi on 18 February, the President noted:

... I believe the U.S.-Japan alliance is the bedrock for peace and prosperity in the Pacific. Japan is a generous host to America's forward-deployed forces, providing an essential contribution to the stability of Asia. This enduring partnership benefits both our countries, but it also benefits the world. ...<sup>34</sup>

Second, Japan's security-related activities outside its territory have still been restricted, therefore, the JSDF have conducted only limited operations overseas. Upon passing the legislation that enabled the JSDF to participate in the war on terrorism, the Prime Minister remarked, "This is what we can do to the best of our ability within the current interpretation of the Constitution."<sup>35</sup> By dispatching the JMSDF vessels to the Indian Ocean in support of the campaign against terrorism, Japan participates in a wartime commitment while Prime Minister Koizumi's remarks imply that Japan's security policy may have reached its culminating point.

If Japan desires to occupy an honored place in an international society, believes that no nation is responsible for itself alone, and pledges its national honor to accomplish these high ideals and purposes with all its resources,<sup>36</sup> it might be time for Japan to reexamine the premises for its security policy.

Similar voices have echoed from the United States. The members of a bipartisan study group published a October 2000 report entitled "The United States and Japan: Advancing Toward a Mature Partnership." In that report, the authors asserted:

Japan's prohibition against collective self-defense is a constraint on alliance cooperation. Lifting this prohibition would allow for closer and more efficient security cooperation. This is a decision that only the Japanese people can make.<sup>37</sup>

Although this report has given the GOJ and other national security community members a shock, no viable action has been taken so far. To fully participate in future U.N.-led or coalition type collective security activities in this VUCA environment, the prohibition of exercising the right of collective self-defense should be lifted. While criteria for the use of weapons are relaxed under the new law, they are not lenient enough to protect the Japanese soldiers and do not allow the JSDF units to provide forces from the coalition countries with full military support.

## THE WAY AHEAD: FURTHER GREAT LEAPS

The arguments regarding the lifting of the ban on collective self-defense can be grouped into two approaches. These approaches are: revising the Cabinet's Legal Affairs Bureau's 1954 interpretation of the Constitution, and amending the Constitution so as to lift the prohibition of the exercise of the right of collective self-defense.

### REVISING THE INTERPRETATION OF THE CONSTITUTION

The Constitution does not per se prohibit the exercise of the right of collective self-defense. The Cabinet's Legal Affairs Bureau insists that while Japan has the right of collective self-defense from the international legal view point, the Constitution prohibits its exercise. The proponents of this school of thought point out that the Cabinet's Legal Affairs Bureau's interpretation contains an inherent inconsistency.<sup>38</sup> They assert that if international law allows any nation to possess the right, the real question should be whether the Constitution actually denies the right or not. However the Bureau is reluctant to answer that question.

The right of self-defense is the right that every sovereign nation possesses. The United Nations Charter of 1945 describes both individual and collective self-defense rights. The Constitution of 1946 does not deny the right to self-defense or the right to collective self-defense. Japan joined the United Nations in 1951 without any condition. The fact that the United Nations Charter does not mention "exercising the right of self-defense" implies that possessing and exercising the rights are an inseparable concept. Therefore, under the Constitution, Japan possesses both the right to self-defense and the right to collective self-defense, and consequently Japan can exercise these rights.

However, the other school of thought criticizes the first approach as dangerous. Altering the interpretation of the Constitution from time to time leaving the Constitution intact may give the wrong message to other nations that Japan will do anything it wants to justifying its policies, and that Japan's policy is unpredictable and inconsistent.<sup>39</sup> Thus, those who are in favor of amending the Constitution have asserted that Japan should clearly state its policy with regard to

the exercise of the right of collective self-defense by amending the Constitution, and that Japan should make its security policy statements clear to the world.

## AMENDING THE CONSTITUTION

Whether or not the constitution should be amended has been debated for quite some time. There are two arguments in this debate. One argument favors an amendment because the current Constitution is incapable of meeting the security challenges Japan has faced since the end of Cold War.<sup>40</sup> Proponents point out the weakness of the Cabinet Legal Affairs Bureau's interpretation and argue that the interpretation should be revised and codified by amendment. They also insist the amendment of the Constitution is necessary since the wording of the current Constitution is so ambiguous that it contains too much room for interpretation.<sup>41</sup>

Proponents against the amending argue that the amending the Constitution to clearly state the nation's right of collective self-defense is simply inadequate, since it is quite clear that Japan possesses the right from an international legal perspective and that the Constitution does not deny this fact. They also point out that constitutions of other nations do not specifically state nations' possession of the right of collective self-defense, even though they may state the right of self-defense.<sup>42</sup>

The difficulty of the amending of the Constitution is often pointed out. The Constitution requires that amendments to the Constitution shall be initiated by the Diet, through a concurring vote of two-thirds or more of all the members of each House. Then it must be submitted to the people for ratification, which shall require the affirmative vote of a majority of all votes cast thereon.<sup>43</sup>

However, the threshold for passing an amendment seems to have lowered recently. The latest survey conducted in March 2002 shows that 71 percent of lawmakers who responded to a recent survey said that they are in favor of revising the Constitution, compared to 60 percent in 1997. The survey also revealed that 54 percent of lawmakers responding said Japan should be able to exercise the right of collective self-defense. When asked what specific revisions need to be made, 90 percent called for stipulating the nation's right of self-defense and providing a constitutional basis for the existence of the JSDF. Interestingly, while 68 percent of lawmakers in their 60s are in favor of the revisions, the percentage of those favoring the revision is higher among younger generations; 69 percent for those in their 50s, 73 percent in 40s and 80 percent in the under 40 years old group. The significant increase in the number of those in favor of constitutional revisions apparently reflects changes in lawmakers' view of the Constitution. This is particularly evident after incidents threatening national security such as incursions into

Japanese waters by suspected North Korean spy boats and the September 11 terrorists attacks. It also reflects the enactment of a bill governing JSDF operations to assist U.S. military forces in emergencies in areas surrounding Japan.<sup>44</sup>

#### IMPLEMENTING THE LIFT OF THE PROHIBITION OF THE RIGHT OF COLLECTIVE SELF-DEFENSE

The interpretation of the Constitution should be revised since the Cabinet Legal Affairs Bureau's current interpretation inherently contains serious problems that cannot be overlooked. The current situation appears to favor amendment of the Constitution. Therefore the battle to lift the prohibition of the right to collective self-defense may be easily won.

The first step is to expand the concept of individual self-defense so that it encompasses more than what is minimally necessary for defense of Japan. The second is to relax the restrictions on the integration of the use of force overseas so that Japan can provide greater rear support for U.S. forces as well as participate more actively in United Nations peacekeeping operations.<sup>45</sup>

#### CONCLUSION

Although Japan has made great strides in developing its security policy, further efforts should be made so that Japan can fully implement its expected role within the international community. As discussed earlier, in order to fully participate in future coalition efforts that help ensure peace and stability of the world, Japan should make another great leap and allow itself to exercise the right of collective self-defense. This move does not necessarily mean that Japan would be automatically involved in future conflicts or development. Exercising the right of collective self-defense should be considered a logical expansion that will help achieve Japan's security ends and to make future coalition efforts more effective as well.

Another issue to be solved is related to the fact that the military is a profession dealing with human lives of both friends and adversaries. Japan has been a major financial contributor to international crises in which it has a stake. However, it has been able to hide behind Article 9 of the Constitution to avoid sending troops into harm's way. This has given Japan the luxury of avoiding casualties in foreign conflicts. Although the JSDF suffered 62 casualties in the last decade, none of them were combat casualties.<sup>46</sup> If Japan decides to send its combat troops to peacekeeping missions in the future, it must be prepared to take combat casualties. In this sense, the political and strategic leaders of the nation must explicitly state and let the Japanese soldiers and the Japanese people understand the moral reasoning for killing or being killed, while accepting the fact that some degree of risk is essential.<sup>47</sup>

It is important for Japan to consider its future active security role in the international context. Deploying the military is still controversial in Japan, where the devastation of the war is bitterly remembered by older generations. And any hint of militarism has always brought strong protests from Japan's neighbors that were targets of Imperial Japan's conquests. Although hundreds of protesters demonstrated during the last week of September 2001 in central Tokyo against Japan's participation in the U.S.-led coalition in the war on terrorism, and North Korea protested against the new law passed in the subsequent month, these should be expected responses. In the mean time, Mr. Koizumi seems to have succeeded in obtaining unprecedented support of the Japanese people and appreciation of the leaders of China, South Korea and ASEAN member countries.<sup>48</sup>

Lastly, it might be true to say, "Danger past, God forgotten," and/or "Once on shore, we pray no more." However, those old maxims should not be applicable to Japan's security policy. Japan should not forget that its efforts to implement a security policy that contributes to international security and stability are just beginning to take shape. Since changing the course of any organization takes a certain length of time, when the political and strategic leaders of the nation begin implementing their vision, as John P. Kotter correctly points out, they also have to develop means to ensure leadership development and succession.<sup>49</sup> At the same time, Japan's political and strategic leaders must institutionalize change. Efforts toward enduring peace never end. Japan in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century should strive not to be described by future historians as wanting the benefits of globalization but not wanting to pay the price for them.<sup>50</sup>

WORD COUNT = 6561

## ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup> *Innovative Multi-Information Dictionary, Annual Series*, 2001 ed., s.v. "the Yoshida Doctrine," (Tokyo, Japan: Shu-Ei Sha, 2000). Mr. Shigeru Yoshida was the Prime Minister of Japan during the period from 1948 to 1954. His policy for Japan's postwar recovery was known as the "Yoshida Doctrine," consisting of focusing the country's resources on economic production supported by well-trained workers while adopting the United States' stance on issues of security and international politics.

<sup>2</sup> Hiro-omi Kurisu, *Anzenhoshō-Gairon (Overview of National Security)* (Tokyo, Japan: Book Business Associates, Inc., 1997), 338. Mr. Kurisu was a former Chairman of the Joint Staff Council (CJSC) of the SDF, 1977-78. He pointed out the limitation of the legislation of Japan in terms of effective military operations of the JSDF. That remark drew the accusation that he intentionally violated such principle of "Japan's" civilian control that any military officers should not touch upon political issues, and eventually led to his resignation as the CJSC.

<sup>3</sup> Bunji Abe et al., *Nihon-no-Anzenhoshō-towa-Nanika (What is Japan's Security?)* (Tokyo, Japan: PHP Kenkyu-jo, 1996), 16.

<sup>4</sup> Article 9, Chapter II, the Constitution of Japan, promulgated on 3 November 1946.

<sup>5</sup> Preamble, the Security Treaty Between Japan and the Untied States of America, signed on 9 September 1951.

<sup>6</sup> Kunihiko Tanaka, *Anzenhoshō: Sengo 50 Nen no Mosaku (Security: 50 Years of Struggle after WWII)* (Tokyo, Japan: Yomiuri Shimbun Sha, 1997), 177. Japan's right of collective self-defense is prescribed in Paragraph (c), Article 5 of the Treaty of Peace with Japan, signed at San Francisco on 8 September 1951: initial entry into force 28 April 1952.

<sup>7</sup> For the full text of the Basic Policy on National Defense, see *Defense of Japan (Defense White Paper) in JFY2001 (English Version)* (Tokyo, Japan: the Japan Defense Agency, 2001), 281.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid., 78-9.

<sup>9</sup> Section V, the Guidelines for Japan-U.S. Defense Cooperation, approved by the Japan-U.S. Security Consultative Committee on 23 September 1997. For the full text of the Defense Guidelines of 1997, see *Defense of Japan 2001*, 325-31.

<sup>10</sup> Satoshi Morimoto, *Anzenhoshō-Ron: 21 Seiki Sekai no Kikikanri (Study on Security: Crisis Management for 21<sup>st</sup> Century World)* (Tokyo, Japan: PHP Kenkyu-jo, 2000), 367.

<sup>11</sup> *Defense of Japan 2001*, 78.

<sup>12</sup> Morimoto, 360. Similar argument is made by Kunihiko Tanaka. *Anzenhoshō*, 178-80.

<sup>13</sup> For the full text of the Defense Guidelines of 1978, see *Defense of Japan (Defense White Paper) in JFY1997 (English Version)* (Tokyo, Japan: the Japan Defense Agency, 1997), 319-23.

<sup>14</sup> Yuichiro Nagatomi, *Kindai wo Koete: Ko Ohira Sori no Nokosareta Mono (Beyond Modern: What the late Prime Minister Ohira Left for Us)* (Tokyo, Japan: Ministry of Finance Association, 1983), 591-3.

<sup>15</sup> Michael J. Green, *Arming Japan: Defense Production, Alliance Politics, and the Postwar Search for Autonomy* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 1995), 81-2.

<sup>16</sup> For detailed information of those events, see *Defense of Japan (Defense White Paper) in JFY2000 (English Version)* (Tokyo, Japan: the Japan Defense Agency, 2000), 141-90.

<sup>17</sup> Noboru Yamaguchi, "Trilateral Security Cooperation: Opportunities, Challenges, and Tasks," in *U.S.-Korea-Japan Relations: Building Toward a "Vital Alliance,"* ed. Ralph A. Cossa (Washington, D.C.: the CSIS Press, 1999), 6.

<sup>18</sup> Paul S. Giarra and Akihisa Nagashima, "Managing the New U.S. Security Alliance: Enhancing Structures and Mechanisms to Address Post-Cold War Requirements," in *The U.S.-Japan Alliance: Past Present, and Future*, eds. Michael J. Green and Patrick M. Cronin (New York, NY: Council on Foreign Relations, 1999), 98-9.

<sup>19</sup> Prime Minister Hashimoto (then) and President Clinton (then) reconfirmed the close security tie of both nations and announced the "Japan-United States Joint Declaration on Security: Alliance for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century" on 17 April 1996 in Tokyo. For the full text of the document, see *Defense of Japan 2001*, 282-5.

<sup>20</sup> Ming Zhang and Ronald N. Montaperto, *A Triad of Another Kind: The United States, China, and Japan* (New York, NY: St. Martin's Press, 1999), 117.

<sup>21</sup> For the full text of the 1995 NDPO, see *Defense of Japan 2001*, 285-91.

<sup>22</sup> Fourteen countries are (year of the first meeting): United Kingdom (1990), Russia (1990), PRC (1993), NATO (1993), Republic of Korea (1994), France (1994), Germany (1994), Australia (1996), Indonesia (1997), Singapore (1997), Canada (1997), Thailand (1998), Malaysia (1999), and Vietnam (2001). *Ibid.*, 225.

<sup>23</sup> Muthiah Alagappa, "Military Professionalism in Asia: Ascendance of the Old Professionalism," in *Military Professionalism in Asia: Conceptual and Empirical Perspectives* (Honolulu, HI: East-West Center, 2001), 209.

<sup>24</sup> *Defense of Japan 2000*, 320-4. *Heisei-13-nendo-Gyoumu-no-Sankou (Defense Agency Staff Officials' Reference JFY2001)* (Tokyo, Japan: the Japan Defense Agency, 2001), 1023-32.

<sup>25</sup> A survey in September 2001 shows that 79% of the Japanese people support Mr. Koizumi. And February 2002 survey showed 55% support after the dismissal of the Foreign Minister who was a popular figure among the people. Nikkei Online, "Nikkei Poll," 1 March 2002; available from <<http://www.nikkei-r.co.jp/nikkeipoll/naikaku/naikaku.htm>>; Internet; accessed 3 March 2002.

<sup>26</sup> Mr. Koizumi's "Seven-Point Plan" includes: a) Dispatch the JSDF for providing support, including medical services, transportation and supplies, to the U.S forces and others, b)

Strengthen the protection of facilities and areas of the U.S. forces and important facilities in Japan, c) Dispatch JSDF vessels for information gathering activities, d) Strengthen international cooperation for immigration control, e) Humanitarian and economic assistance to related countries (incl. Pakistan and India), f) Support displaced persons, g) Cooperate other countries to stabilize world and Japan's economy. TV Asahi, "Mr. Koizumi's Seven-Point Plan," 19 September 2001; available from <[http://www.tv-asahi.co.jp/n-station/news/us\\_attack/us\\_attk.htm](http://www.tv-asahi.co.jp/n-station/news/us_attack/us_attk.htm)>; Internet; accessed 10 November 2001.

<sup>27</sup> The law (*Tai Tero Tokubetsu Sochi Ho (Antiterrorism Special Measures Act)*) will be effective for two years after the promulgation and another legislation is necessary to extend the effectiveness of the law. For the full text of the law, see "Tai Tero Tokubetsu Sochi Ho," 29 October 2001; available from <<http://www.kantei.go.jp/jp/kakugikettei/2001/1102terohou.html>>; Internet; accessed 10 November 2001.

<sup>28</sup> *Asagumo Shimbun* (Tokyo), 14 March 2002.

<sup>29</sup> Yomiuri On Line, "Fushin Sen," 24 December 2001; available from <<http://www.yomiuri.co.jp/fushinsen/index.htm>>; Internet; accessed 27 December 2001.

<sup>30</sup> Sankei Shimbun Online, "Kaisei PKO Ho Seiritsu: PKF Toketsu wo Kaijo," 7 December 2001; available from <<http://sankei.pmall.ne.jp/sankei/F/sample/online/e-paper/today/itimene08iti006.htm>>; Internet; accessed 10 December 2001. Special assignments undertaken by JSDF units, the so-called core mission of peacekeeping forces, were suspended until the date stipulated by law (so-called "moratorium") in the process of the Diet deliberation of the International Peace Cooperation Bill in order to gain more understanding and support both at home and abroad. Since 1999, a relaxation on the moratorium on the assignments for core units of peacekeeping forces had been debated in the Diet. *Defense of Japan 2001*, 212-4. In order to more effectively meet possible UN request for future peacekeeping operation, in July 2001, the GOJ dispatched an officer of the JGSDF to the Permanent Mission to the United Nations for the first time since Japan became a member of the United Nations in 1956. The GOJ also decided to dispatch two officers of the JSDF to the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, the United Nations by summer of 2002. *Asagumo Shimbun*, 25 October 2001.

<sup>31</sup> For detailed information of the study, see *Defense of Japan 2001*, 128-30.

<sup>32</sup> Japan Times Online, 22 March 2002; available from <<http://www.japantimes.co.jp/cgi-bin/getarticle.p15?np20020322al.htm>>; Internet; accessed 22 March 2002.

<sup>33</sup> U.S. President, *A National Security Strategy for a Global Age* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2000), William J. Clinton, 2000, 48-9.

<sup>34</sup> "Transcript: Bush, Koizumi on Terrorism, Japan's Economy at Tokyo," 18 February 2002; available from <<http://usembassy.state.gov/tokyo/wwwus0047.html>>; Internet; accessed 20 February 2002.

<sup>35</sup> Yomiuri On Line, "Tai Tero Tokushakuho Seiritsu," 30 October 2001; available from <[http://www.yomiuri.co.jp/attack/1030\\_04.htm](http://www.yomiuri.co.jp/attack/1030_04.htm)>; Internet; accessed 1 November 2001.

<sup>36</sup> Preamble, the Constitution of Japan.

<sup>37</sup> Institute for National Strategic Studies, National Defense University, "The United States and Japan: Advancing Toward a Mature Partnership," 11 October 2000; available from <[http://www.ndu.edu/ndu/SR\\_JAPAN.HTM](http://www.ndu.edu/ndu/SR_JAPAN.HTM)>; Internet; accessed 15 December 2001.

<sup>38</sup> For instance, Masamori Sase, *Shudan-Teki Jieiken: Ronso no Tameni (The Right of Collective Self-Defense: For Argument)* (Tokyo, Japan: PHP Kenkyu-jo, 2001), 179-204. Osamu Nishi, *Nihonkoku Kempo wo Kangaeru (Reviewing the Constitution of Japan)* (Tokyo, Japan: Bungei Shunju, 1999), 94-107.

<sup>39</sup> Satoshi Morimoto, "Security Reforms: Japan's Last Bastion," *Forum on Foreign Affairs* 14, no. 11 (2000): 29.

<sup>40</sup> Sase, 261.

<sup>41</sup> For example, Yasuhiro Nakasone, "Nihonkoku Kenpo Seitei Ron (An Argument on an Enactment of Japan's Constitution)," 1 March 2000; available from <<http://www.yatchan.com/seiji/index.html>>; Internet; accessed 23 December 2001. For similar discussion, see Tadae Takubo, *Atarashii Nichi-Bei Domei (New Japan-U.S. Alliance)* (Tokyo, Japan: PHP Kenkyu-jo, 2001), 116-9.

<sup>42</sup> Sase, 263-5.

<sup>43</sup> Article 96, the Constitution of Japan.

<sup>44</sup> The Yomiuri Shimbun conducted the survey by sending questionnaires to all 724 incumbent House of Representatives and House of Councilors lawmakers from 1 March through March 18. Among them, 469 lawmakers – 306 lower house members and 163 upper house members – 64.8% responded. Daily Yomiuri On Line, "Constitution Change favored 71% of Diet Members Want Nation's Basic Law Amended," (23 March 2002); available from <<http://www.yomiuri.co.jp/news/e/20020322wo01.htm>>; Internet; accessed 23 March 2002.

<sup>45</sup> Mike M. Mochizuki, "A New Bargain for a Stronger Alliance," in *Toward a True Alliance: Restructuring U.S.-Japan Security Relations* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution, 1997), 33.

<sup>46</sup> *Defense Agency Staff Officials' Reference*, 746.

<sup>47</sup> During the UNTAC mission, one Japanese civilian police officer was shot and killed. His death brought a serious debate among the Japanese people concerning moral reasoning of his death.

<sup>48</sup> Mr. Koizumi traveled China and South Korea in October to explain Japan's move. He also attended APEC summit in October and ASEAN+3 (Japan, China, South Korea) in November and explained Japan's move. For the speeches and scripts of Mr. Koizumi's press conference, see Kantei (Prime Minister's Office) , "Press Conference after ASEAN+3 Summit," 06 November 2001; available from

<<http://www.kantei.go.jp/jp/koizumispeech/2001/1106asean.html>>; Internet; accessed 12 November 2001.

<sup>49</sup> John P. Kotter, *Leading Change* (Boston, MA: Harvard Business School Press, 1996), 20-3.

<sup>50</sup> Thomas W. Robinson, "Asia-Pacific Security Relations: Changes Ahead," in *The Global Century: Globalization and National Security*, eds. Richard L. Kugler and Ellen L. Frost (Washington, D.C.: National Defense University Press, 2001), 1010.



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